

to gerry locklin, at age thirty

poet of perversity! you know how important it is to die in your twenties, but you refused for the same reason you won't comb your hair or wash your levis -- somebody once said you ought to.

granted, you're more than you pretend to be: the desert-booted barrymore of the 49-er tavern, outpinballing Tommy, seeing beyond Tiresias, towering over trivia, in whispered understatement to a court of wide-eyed blonds, all tan and 22.

but O, gerry, why 30?

don't you remember any of the dialog from On The Waterfront? you could've been a somebody. don't you know '30' is newspaper lingo for 'the end'? don't you know what lies ahead? i, a tattered coat of 43, will tell you. women will coo they like older men. they mean about 24, as it was with Zelda Sayre. expect to pick up more crepuscular chicks. these kids are not just emperors of ice cream. and from here on in every athlete will seem to be dying young.

but since you even stopped smoking to go on living, let's rewrite together a pearl or two from Satchel Paige: (1) keep looking back. you won't like where you're going anyway. (2) when in doubt, for counsel seek out ezra brooks. ponce de leon never had a bourbon named after him!

Speed Kills

karl is a friend of mine. to get all A's and open up his world through great books he enrolled in E. Wood's speed read school.

the results were more than he expected. with hand palm-up on page he whirled like the wind through The Old Man and the Sea in eight, The Pearl in three minutes; Animal Farm took but a single revolution. and there's much that lingers on: DiMaggio, bonespur, apple core, or was it albacore? but the course touched him elsewhere too: balling he sounds like a riveter. listen? no more. he can only speed hear. drinking, as you might imagine, has become a problem. did he, like Santiago, go out too far?